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LONG ISLAND CHILDREN'S MUSEUM NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

Arts Education Leader, Fundraiser and Program Developer Chosen

GARDEN CITY (April 10, 2023) Long Island Children's Museum announced that **Erika S. Floreska** has been named President of the accredited museum following a rigorous national search. Floreska, succeeds President Suzanne LeBlanc, who is retiring after 17 years in the role. Floreska will step into her new position effective June 3.

LICM Board Chair Scott Burman announced the selection, noting "Erika Floreska stood out from an impressive list of candidates during our national search. She has the vision, enthusiasm and commitment to build on the Museum's 30-year history and identify new opportunities to support the children, schools and communities Long Island Children's Museum serves."

Moving Forward

"I am excited and energized to take on this leadership role at LICM," said Floreska. "I look forward to building on the Museum's long-standing commitment to serving all of Long Island's diverse communities, and ensuring the Museum continues to be an inclusive and welcoming, educational and playful environment for all who want to visit. LICM is a gathering space for people across the region to explore, play, wonder, and create," she said. "No doubt during these turbulent times, we all need more of that, especially our children. I believe the Museum is poised to serve our community in deeper and broader ways; building on the strong foundation we have, and I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to lead LICM into the future."

Commitment is Personal

Floreska's connection with the Children's Museum began 18 years ago when her family became Museum members, shortly after moving to Baldwin. She sought out places in her new community that were welcoming environments for her family.

“We found a home at LICM; a place where we could always come and see smiling and supportive faces. It was a place that we were excited to share with friends and family from out of town,” she said. For many years, she attended LICM, hosted birthday parties for her kids, and attended special events creating special memories that last to today. Three years ago, she chose to join the leadership staff at the Museum. “It was a conscious career decision,” she explains. “I wanted to give back to the community where my husband and I raised our children.”

Career highlights

Throughout her 30-year career Erika Floreska has contributed to moving the mission forward at some of New York’s most vibrant cultural institutions including Bloomingdale School of Music, Tectonic Theater Project and Jazz at Lincoln Center before joining Long Island Children’s Museum as Director of Development in 2020.

While the first day on a new job is always memorable, Floreska’s was truly unforgettable, coinciding with the Children’s Museum’s forced COVID-19 closure. She instantly won the respect of board and staff members as she assumed a strategic role in producing the museum’s first *virtual* benefit, surpassing the goal by more than 10% raising \$660,000. During her three-year tenure at LICM, she has co-created and led a strategic effort to deepen long-standing relationships with foundations and corporations and establish new sponsorship opportunities. She’s worked to develop new and expanded individual giving opportunities, all resulting in over a 20% increase in contributed income, helping return the Museum to financial health through the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Executive Director of the *Bloomingdale School of Music*, she led a strategic turnaround of a 55-year-old community institution to ensure the mission of access to high-quality music instruction for all. She established a relationship-based individual giving program securing its first major planned gift for more than \$3M.

As Executive Director of *Tectonic Theater Project*, she produced critically recognized productions that amplify the voices of underrepresented communities, including *The Laramie Project Cycle* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the *Tallest Tree in the Forest* at KC Rep, LaJolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, DC, and Taper Forum in LA, as well as *Square Peg Round Hole* about life on the autism spectrum. She also hired their first full-time Education Director expanding education workshops and secured a publishing deal for a book outlining the Tectonic method for developing plays, Moment Work.

During her 14 years as Director of Education at *Jazz at Lincoln Center*, Floreska worked closely with Artistic Director, Wynton Marsalis, and was responsible for the direction of education programs that had local, national, and international reach. These included *Essentially Ellington*, the country's leading high-school jazz band program, the *Middle School Jazz Academy*, an innovative approach to teaching instrumental jazz, *WeBop*, a highly successful program for toddlers and caregivers designed with experts at Teachers College – Columbia, and *Jazz for Young People* – a concert series hosted by Wynton Marsalis.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, she traces her commitment to arts and education service to growing up in a family filled with musicians and educators. She is a passionate advocate for music education and a professional musician, holding two degrees in Flute Performance from the College of Wooster, and the University of Michigan. Additionally, she is a Certified Fund Raising Executive. Erika lives in Baldwin, NY with her husband, and her musical children, a college sophomore and freshman.

About the Long Island Children's Museum (www.licm.org)

The mission of Long Island Children's Museum is to connect all our communities' children, and those who care for them, to a life of wonder, imagination and exploration. At LICM, children discover their passions and their relationship to the world we share. The 40,000-square-foot museum welcomes nearly 275,000 children and adults annually. The private, not-for-profit institution chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, offers museum-based educational programs and cultural experiences, as well as an extensive community outreach program offered in schools, libraries and youth centers across Long Island. Additionally, the Children's Museum operates the historic Nunley's Carousel in association with Nassau County, one of three intact Stein & Goldstein carousels still in existence.

LICM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), recognized as the field's gold standard for museum excellence and signifies a museum's quality, credibility and deep commitment to mission and community. Less than 3% of the nation's more than 30,000 museums have earned this recognition. LICM is currently the only children's museum in NY State, and just one of 16 nationwide, to achieve accreditation. The Museum is the recipient of the 2012 National Medal for Museum & Library Service, the highest honor conferred on museums for extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions.

Photo Caption:

[Erika Floreska Named LICM President](#)